Committees (TACs) arc made in the prescribed categories as approved by Hon'ble Minister for Communications.

(b) and (c) Telephone/Telecom Advisory Committees have already been set up in all the States and meetings of the TACs are held from time to time preferably when the Parliament is not in Session. Efforts are made to hold TAC meetings regularly, however, at some places meetings get delayed due to geographical constraint and unforeseen reasons. The department of Telecom has issued instructions to all the Circle Offices to hold TAC meetings regularly at a convenient date and time every quarter of the year preferably when the Parliament is not in Session.

Depositing of telephone bills in banks

†994. SHRI BACHANI LEKH RAJ: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that with a view of facilitate the telephone subscribers Government arc considering to increase the number of such banks where telephone bills can be deposited;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any action in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Over 3457 branches of various nationalised/scheduled banks and the State Bank of India have already been .authorised throughout the country for collection of bills for the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited. Efforts are being made to increase this number further.

Improvement of telecom network in Manipur

995. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government arc aware of the frequent disruption of telephone network in Imphal and other districts of Manipur;

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, what arc the reasons for such disruption; and

(c) the measures taken by Government to expand and improve the telephone networks in Manipur?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) There have been some disruptions of telecom network in Manipur except in Imphal town.

(b) Most of them are generally caused by very frequent power breakdown daily (especially outside Imphal town) coupled with the shortage of diesel in the districts and the difficulties experienced in transportation of men and material to the telecom installations due to the disturbed condition in Manipur.

(c) Continuous measures have been taken to expand and improve the telephone networks of Manipur. The growth rate of 33% in rural areas and 16% in urban area in working telephone connections has been achieved in Manipur on an average during the last three years apart from commissioning of 3000 lines new technology trunk automatic Exchange at Imphal, Internet node in April 2001, 2 major optical fibre cable routes, viz., Imphal-Morech & Imphal-Churachandpur and a major Microwave route, *viz.,* Imphal-Silchar.

The measures proposed to be taken to improve and expand the telephone network in Manipur during 2001-2002 are given below:

(i) Commissioning of reliable media for remaining six exchanges to make all the exchanges connected on reliable media in Manipur

(ii) Opening of new exchanges and upgradation/expansion of some existing exchanges

(iii) Introduction of Wireless in the Local Loop (WLL) phones.

Outstanding dues against cellular operators

996. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that huge amount of dues is outstanding against the cellular operators;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for allowing the accumulation of such outstanding dues; and

(c) the steps taken and proposed to be taken by Government to recover the outstanding dues from the cellular operators?